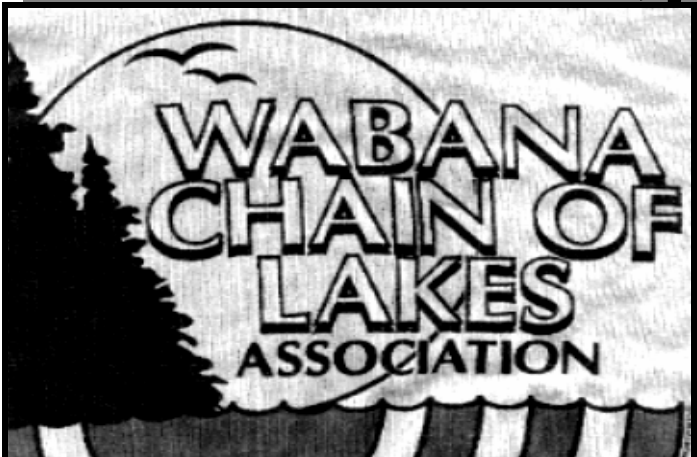


# The Chain Letter of the



Dedicated to the care and preservation of our lakes, for the enjoyment and safety of all

# April 2008

1

Volume 11, Number 1

Editor: Bill Downing

**Please note new email addresses:**

[wdowningster@gmail.com](mailto:wdowningster@gmail.com)

[djkoewler@q.com](mailto:djkoewler@q.com)

38067 Forest Lane, Grand Rapids, MN 55744, 218-326-4730

1834 Simpson St, Falcon Heights, MN 55113, 651-644-9625

Cell phone 651-303-2279

**Next Newsletter deadline: June 1, 2008**

#### Officers:

President: Dick Chambers 326-2809

Vice President: Lloyd Adams 326-2130

Treasurer: Jean Koewler 326-4302

Secretary: Gail Olijnek 326-2431

#### Advisory Committee:

Lloyd Adams 326-2130

Steve Bryant 326-5473

Nancy Ellsworth 326-8056

David Lick 326-6837

Roger Linder 326-2266

Sherry Miner 326-0589

Cathy Rudolph 327-0820

John Zimmerman 326-1020

**Visit our web site [www.wcola.org](http://www.wcola.org)**

**Add your items to it by sending to Mark Miner,  
[mminer@minergroup.com](mailto:mminer@minergroup.com)**

#### CONTENTS:

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT	1
NOTE FROM THE EDITOR	1
MEETING DATES FOR 2008	1
SECCHI DISK READINGS, 2006-07	2-3
WATER LEGACY PARTNERSHIP	3
BONFIRES ON THE LAKE	4-5

#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The signs of spring are upon us, as well as the time for a newsletter article. In May we will start our monthly meetings. The dates for our meetings were established last fall by the Association's Advisory Committee, so we could lock in those dates, with the Township's Town Hall use for 2008. I believe we will have a lot of discussion about the proposed power plant. This was an item of major interest this past year, and it will come up again I'm sure. We have all read about some exotic fish that could get into Lake Superior, and possibly other waters. This has to be of great concern for lake associations. We have got to work more closely with ICOLA also. We can start to discuss these and other topics on May 17th the first meeting of 2008, Hope to see you there. Dick

#### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am trying to edit this issue of the *Chain Letter* at very long distance—that is from the island of Mallorca in the Mediterranean Sea. I have been here nearly four months, staying with my son John, his wife Marcia, and two little dogs, in an apartment in Palma in this beautiful Spanish land. I expect to be back home in Falcon Heights in the middle of April, but since I will be very busy then, with cataract surgery etc, I need to get it done now. If you want to see where I spent this winter, check my blog, [www.billinspain.blogspot.com](http://www.billinspain.blogspot.com) I want to get this to you in time to notify you about upcoming meeting dates. The Minutes of the September 2007 meeting, are about 7000 miles away right now, so I'll have to postpone printing them.

**MEETING DATES FOR 2008, THIRD SATURDAY OF MONTHS, MAY 17, JUNE 21, JULY 19, AUGUST 16, SEPTEMBER 20. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW, SINCE THIS IS YOUR OFFICIAL NOTICE. COFFEE AT 8:30, MEETING AT 9:00, PROGRAM AT 10:00.**

2006 SECCHI DISK READINGS

Basin	BN	BS	IN	LW	TN	TC	TS	TSW	WC	WN	WS	WW	IS
May	1												
	2	16		21						17			
	3	19.8		17	16.5	17	16	18		17.5	15	11	
	4		22.5	17	23	23.5	23	23		19			
Jun	1	21	23		25.5	24.5	22	24			21	17	
	2	27	24	17	22.5	24.5	20		18.6	17		17	21
	3	26.5	25		19	20	15	18		16.5	20	18	
	4	23.5	25	18.5	24.5	20.5	21.5	19.5	21	17		17	19.5
Jul	1	23.5	24	19	20.6	17	19	19	20	19	17.5	18.5	17.5
	2	19.5			22				19	18	20.5	19	19
	3	22.5	20	21.5	22	17.5	17	19	18	20	17	20.5	20
	4	23.5	23.5	22	19.5	17	17	19	17	19	18	20.5	20
Aug	1	20	22	22		14	15	18	15		16		16
	2	21	21			13	13	17	14	19	18	18.5	19.5
	3	21.5	22		21.5						17.5	18	16
	4	20.5	22.5	21.5		12	12	19	12	19	16.5	17.5	20
Sep	1	22	22.5	21	24.5					19.5	16.5	16	15
	2	21	22		20	12	13	22	12.5	19	16.5	16	19.5
	3		22								15.5		
	4												
Readers	George Klacan	Nancy Ellsworth	Paul Oberg	Cheryl Adams	Bill Berg	John Zimmerman	John Zimmerman	Bill Berg	Sherry Miner	Ken Zimmer	Susan Lick	Dennis & Jean Koewler	Sherry Miner

2007 SECCHI DISK READINGS

Basin	BN	BS	IN	LW	TN	TC	TS	TSW	WC	WN	WS	WW	IS
May	1												
	2	17.5											
	3	18.5			18	18	15	17		15.5			
	4	17.5	18							16.5	20		
Jun	1	18	18.5	27	27	18.5	19.5	18.5	17.5				
	2	20.5	20	23.5	21					15.5	17.5	17	
	3	23	21	20.5	18	21	24	16	21	20.5	16.5	18.5	20
	4	22.5	21.5		21	22	23			21.5	21	21.5	20
Jul	1	27.5	24.5	23					20	17.5	17	20	18
	2	27	21		21	15	20	18	15	19	18.5		
	3	19	21	22		15	14	17	15	22	18	18.5	22
	4	21	20	24	21	13	13	15	13	20	18	19.5	19
Aug	1	19	16		20	14.5	15	20	15	19	17		22
	2	20	16	23		15	17	19	15	18.5	16	15.5	18
	3	18.5	16.5		18	20	18	17	17		15.5	17.5	
	4	18.5	16	23	15	20	20	19	17	21.5	15.5	19.5	21
Sep	1	17.5	20			20				17			
	2	18				16	17.5	20	18		16	18.5	
	3	18		20							18		
	4	15											
Readers	George Klacan	Nancy Ellsworth	Paul Oberg	Cheryl Adams	Bill Berg - John Zimmerman				Sherry Miner	Ken Zimmer	Susan Lick	Dennis Koewler	Sherry Miner

## SECCHI DISK READINGS

Page 2 contains the Secchi Disk readings for two years. Nancy Ellsworth, who has coordinated the Secchi disk project since its beginning (and before!), got the readings to me for 2006 in plenty of time to have them printed, but I became hospitalized and out of commission for the winter and spring, and they waited until now to get printed. They are very interesting. The very best thing about them is that we **have** them, recorded since 1990, for ten basins in our chain of lakes. Other lakes may have opinions about their clarity, while we have facts.

Now we have expanded our readings to include two more sites in Trout Lake, and the Island Sound in Wabana. I wish that we had data about Secchi Disk readings for Clearwater and the Hanson Lakes. Are there volunteers for this historic need?

Fortunately we do not see the kind of change that might indicate a trend in water clarity, though there are a couple of surprises. Wabana Wakeman continues to be clearer than expected, and perhaps becoming clearer. Wabana North seems to be less clear than I expected. Since this is in my neck of the woods, I'm concerned to see if there is a human cause for this.

The weeks in the month are numbered 1-2-3-4.

The shorthand for the basins is as follows:

BN = Bluewater North

BS = Bluewater South

IN = Interlachen (aka "Little Trout")

LW = Little Wabana

TN = Trout North (farthest north basin)

TC = Trout Central (off Joyce estate)

TS = Trout South

TSW = Trout Southwest (north of island)

WC = Wabana Central

WN = Wabana North

WS = Wabana South

WW = Wabana Wakeman Bay

IS = Island Sound

I want to thank all the Secchi Disk readers on behalf of our membership, for the many hours they have spent in taking these readings. Every number you see means that someone has chosen a day that is as

still as possible, near to noon for best light, has gone to his/her spot, dropped the disk over the side of the boat, peered down into the water to be sure just when the disk disappears, then recording the depth. The work is not physically demanding, but it does require commitment. Two people can share the load, or two or more families. When you see the people listed, please thank them for this volunteer service to WCOLA.

## WATER LEGACY PARTNERSHIP

From John Downing

### Itasca Water Legacy Partnership Activities

Some WCOLA members may remember Dave Lick and I reporting on the Itasca Water Legacy Partnership (IWLP). This is a group of specialists and community leaders assembled with the assistance of the Blandin Foundation in order to help ensure the on-going health of the water resources of Itasca County.

This group has been very busy over the last several months, writing grants and making plans. One of the principal objectives of the group is to increase the amount of water monitoring information available on Itasca County lakes. To this end, IWLP partners wrote a grant proposal to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to *collect full assessment data on 147 lakes in the county* that so far have insufficient monitoring data (does not include WCOLA lakes). This proposal *has received funding* and monitoring will begin this summer. Monitoring will be performed by students and staff of Itasca Community College with the guidance of limnologists Jack Jones (Deer Lake) and John Downing (Wabana Lake).

Another funded proposal was coordinated by Dave Lick. The group *received funding* to support improvement of *poor septic systems* on recreational development lakes in order to help preserve fragile water quality.

Another important *grant proposal is pending* before the Blandin Foundation Board. This grant proposal was put together by about a dozen IWLP partners and has three important objectives. One objective is to establish *a training facility and fully functional*

*water quality laboratory* at Itasca Community College. This facility will be the backbone of a new water quality technology training program at the College that will give outstanding economic opportunities to the region's youth while offering cost-effective water quality capacity in the county.

This facility and program is made possible by a ten-year volunteer commitment to the program by local limnologists (Jack Jones & John Downing), the Dean of ICC (Barbara McDonald), the Provost of ICC (Mike Johnson), ICC staff (Sue Hutchins, Harry Hutchins, and Tim Fox), NRCS personnel (Jim Gustafson & Noel Griese), and a DNR scientist (Rian Reed).

Two other *parts of this proposal* to the Blandin Foundation will provide the first ever full assessment of *the economic value* of Itasca County's water quality and will work with social marketing methods to foster behaviors that sustain high quality waters.

The plan is that two well-known environmental economists (Kevin Egan and Jay Corrigan) will work with limnologists to provide enhanced economic information. Land value data alone provides an inadequate framework for development decisions, because most of the benefits to society are not directly bought and sold.

This study will provide an assessment of the aesthetic value of the lakes, the value of the biodiversity they support, the value of the recreational opportunities they provide, and how these values change due to changes in water quality.

This valuation study will provide critical information for policymakers who must weigh the benefits of protecting water quality against the costs of those protections.

Further, Mary Blickendorfer of University of Minnesota Extension and Erika Rivers of DNR will work with social marketing professionals to design, develop, implement and evaluate three social marketing campaigns targeted at *fostering three behaviors* in Itasca County:

- 1) the voluntary upgrade of noncompliant septic systems by riparian landowners,

- 2) the protection or restoration of native shoreland buffers by riparian landowners,
- 3) The planning and implementation of conservation subdivisions by local developers in an economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable manner.

These campaigns will build public understanding and support by helping residents recognize their individual rights and responsibilities to care for these resources that will sustain them for future generations to use and enjoy. Itasca County has proposed to use Environmental Trust Funds to provide up to 100% of cost to upgrade septic systems for low-income households while a revolving, low-cost loan program, underwritten by the Blandin Foundation is proposed to help other home-owners.

Last minute note: Just before publication of the *Chain Letter*, the IWLP received word that the Blandin Foundation *denied funding for all of the three proposals above*. Although state funding has been forthcoming for IWLP's ideas, IWLP members hope that local funding will eventually follow to protect the resource that is the principal economic foundation of this area.

*From the Editor: I am shocked to hear that the Blandin Foundation turned down the proposal from the group that it was instrumental in forming. If you want to contact someone about this important matter, email John Downing at [downing@iastate.edu](mailto:downing@iastate.edu)*

*and Dave Lick at [davidl@itacareliableinsurance.com](mailto:davidl@itacareliableinsurance.com)*

## **BONFIRES ON THE LAKE**

*Nancy Ellsworth sent me the following last year, a press release from the MDNR. Press of other business prevented publication then, but we now have room for this important information. Last Autumn I took a quiet evening tour around the more inhabited parts of Wabana, and was surprised to see so many bonfires, with pleasant singing and conversation around them. And I wondered, 'Where are all the ashes going? Surely not into*

*the lake!' So I pulled the release out to for publication in this issue of the Chain Letter.j*

## A LESS-POLLUTING BONFIRE



Relaxing by a bonfire as the hot summer day turns into a starlit evening is a northern Minnesota tradition that spans generations. In days gone by, many of us burned leaves and brush from our lakeshore property right along the shoreline. But as development pressures have increased on our lake, lake experts are encouraging use to move our bonfire away from the shore in an effort to protect the lake.

The ashes from bonfires contain phosphorous, an abundance of which can stimulate an overgrowth of algae and aquatic plants. These plants decompose after they die, and in the course of several generations can cause a lake bottom to become mucky.

According to a recent University of Utah study, an average bonfire contains 22 pounds of firewood and produces enough phosphorous to raise the phosphorous level one part per billion in 350,000 gallons of lake water. With many lakeshore owners enjoying bonfires over the summer, that level of phosphorus can impact water quality.

Over time, the water quality consequences of bonfires may impact fish, aquatic organisms

and drinking water. The amount of phosphorus that reaches the lake increases if a bonfire is located on sloped or sparsely vegetated ground. Lakeowners can still enjoy wonderful lake-view bonfires by following a few simple guidelines.

1) Choose a location that is lake-friendly. Move your fire as far from the shoreline as possible, and try to site it above a well-vegetated, buffered shoreline to encourage optimal infiltration of sediments.

2) Dispose of ashes in a metal container, away from the shoreline. After the fire is properly extinguished, disposing of ashes far from the shoreline will minimize the opportunity for excess phosphorus to make it into the lake via wind or runoff.

3) Build a small fire pit with a dished-out bottom. This will encourage infiltration, rather than runoff, of any remaining ash during runoff events.

4) Keep the fire small, and avoid burning anything containing plastic, foam or paint. Small fires will produce less phosphorus. Plastics, foam and paint all contain harmful chemicals, which when burned can make it into the lake through runoff and rainfall.

5) Extinguish the fire completely. Never leave a fire unattended or leave it to smolder. Unintended wildfires temporarily denude a landscape in their aftermath, a situation that creates increased runoff and sedimentation in lakes.

*John did a little looking up and number crunching about this, and emailed me:*

“According to Demeyer et al (2001; Bioresources Technology 77: 287-295), the concentration of phosphorus in the ash of wood and bark is 10.5 g/kg. This means that every pound of wood ash contains about 5 grams of elemental phosphorus. The phosphorus concentration of a eutrophic lake is about 40 micrograms/liter or 160 micrograms/gallon. This means that every pound of wood ash that gets to the lake can make 31,250 gallons of our lake eutrophic.”

***THIS IS THE FIRST  
2008 ISSUE OF THE  
“CHAIN LETTER”  
OF THE WABANA  
CHAIN OF LAKES  
ASSOCIATION. IT  
CONTAINS THE  
MEETING  
SCHEDULE FOR  
THE SUMMER.***

***MAY 17, 2008  
JUNE 21, 2008  
JULY 19, 2008  
AUGUST 16, 2008  
SEPTEMBER 20,  
2008***

***WABANA  
TOWNSHIP  
COMMUNITY  
HALL, 8:30 A. M.***

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE  
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION  
Jean Koewler, Treasurer  
32040 Wakeman Bay Trail  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744